

REMARKS

Claims 8-17 and 21-22 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment cancels claims 8-9, 15-17, and 21. Thus, claims 10-14 and 22 are presented for consideration upon entry of the instant amendment.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 22. Claim 22 has been amended into independent format, namely to include the elements of base 21. Claim 22 is now allowable.

The specification has been amended at paragraph [0037] to correct an obvious typographical error.

The Office Action objected to the drawings asserting that reference characters 10 and 28 have been used in two different configurations, namely the Office Action asserts that Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate different configurations.

Applicant respectfully traverses these objections.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the same embodiment of the present application. Figure 1 illustrates the connecting member (10) of the present application fully assembled. However, Figure 2 illustrates only the housing (15) of the connecting member. Thus, in Figure 2 as compared to Figure 1, the first locking member (16) is not shown, the second locking member (18) is not shown, and the lower retaining rim (56) is not shown.

Notwithstanding the above, reference number 10 has been removed from Figure 2 for purposes of clarity.

According, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

The Office Action also objected to the drawings on the grounds that it is unclear what the line at the second end 30 of the connecting member represents. The Office Action notes that this line is not shown in Figure 2.

Applicant respectfully traverses these objections.

Starting at the second end (30) of housing (15) in Figure 1, the line above the second end (30) represents the bottom edge of the lower retaining rim (56). This bottom edge of the lower retaining rim (56) is not shown in Figure 2, because the lower retaining rim itself is not shown in Figure 2. The lower retaining rim (56) is shown in its entirety in Figure 5.

According, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

The Office Action also asserts that it is unclear what feature is depicted by dimension 60 in Figure 2. In Figure 2, dimension 60 illustrates the length of the upper retaining rim (40). In Figure 5, dimension 60 illustrates the length of the lower retaining rim (56). This feature is described in detail at paragraph [0040] of the present application.

According, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

In Figure 3, reference number 18 has been changed to 16 as suggested by the Office Action. In addition, reference number 40 has been added to Figure 2 to further conform Figure 2 and Figure 1 to one another.

Claims 14 and 22 have been amended in the manner suggested by the Office Action. Claim 18 was cancelled previously. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the claims are respectfully requested.

Claim 10 and 14 have been amended into independent format, namely to include the elements of base claim 8. Claim 11 has been amended to depend from claim 10.

Claims 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled, rendering the rejection to these claims moot.

The Office Action asserts that the use of the modifier “second” with respect to various element of claims 10 and 14 makes it unclear whether a “first” of the elements is required. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the claims can not have a “second” feature without a “first” feature.

Applicant respectfully traverses this assertion.

The modifiers used in claims 10-14 conform with those used by the specification of the present application. It is respectfully submitted that conformance between the specification and claims seems to the Applicant to be the most efficient and clear way to claim the invention.

It is submitted that removing the modifier “second” from would place the claims contrary to the description in the specification. The Court has held that non-conformance between the specification and claims may make an otherwise definite claim, indefinite. See MPEP 2173.03.

Further, the present application has specifically noted that the terms used modify various elements of the present disclosure do not imply a spatial, sequential, or

hierarchical order to the modified elements unless specifically stated. See paragraph [0049].

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claim language is definite. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to the claims under 112 are respectfully requested.

Claim 10 was indicated as being allowable if the rejection under 112 was overcome. In light of the above discussion with respect to the 112 rejections, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10, as well as claims 11-13 that depend therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,937,473 to Lisowski (Lisowski).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Independent claim 14 requires, in part, a second locking member that is "on said housing (emphasis added)".

However, Lisowski discloses a detent 62 that is within rod 52. See Figures 14 and 15.

Thus, claim 14 requires that the second locking member be "on" the housing, while Lisowski discloses a detent mounted within the rod. Clearly, the detent mounted within the rod of Lisowski does not disclose or suggest the second locking member that is "on" the housing of claim 14.

Further, independent claim 14 also requires that the second tab be "releasably connectable to the second part in said housing when said second tab is biased through said second opening (emphasis added)."

In Lisowski, the detent 62 secures the tubular fitting 76 of the rake head 54 over the rod 52. See Figures 14 and 15.

Thus, the connecting member of claim 14 is releasably connectable to the second part that is in the housing, while Lisowski discloses a detent that connects to the part that is over the rod.

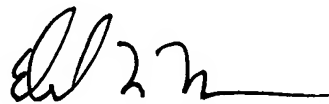
Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Lisowski does not disclose or suggest the connecting member of claim 14. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claim 14 are respectfully requested.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for examination. Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration and passage of this application to allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicant's attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Applicant encloses herewith replace sheets for original Figures 2 and 3. In Figure 2, reference number 10 has been removed, while reference number 40 has been added. In Figure 3, reference number 18 has been corrected to reference number 16.